DESTINY DOOMED

BY ANINA-MARIE VAN WYK

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An Observatory Theatre Publication

Publication and Copyright

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Writer & Director's Note

When I first encountered the legend of 'Deirdre of the Sorrows', I was struck by its beauty, its tragedy, and its silence. Not the silence of the words, but the silence forced upon Deirdre herself. In the original telling, her life is a prophecy fulfilled, a destiny decided long before she draws breath. She is acted upon, traded, claimed, and mourned. But she rarely speaks. She rarely chooses.

I could not leave her there.

Destiny Doomed began with a question: What happens when a woman refuses to stay in the story men have written for her? What if she sees the game for what it is and decides to play her own? The script carries echoes of our world, the way "his reign goes unchecked and his policies unchallenged for generations of men who operate under some misguided sense of brotherhood." Patriarchy doesn't just crown kings; it teaches generations of men to guard the crown.

Deirdre's journey is one of learning the truth and the cost of her own power. At first, she fears it. "I was terrified. I didn't ken my own power." Women are taught to fear their strength because strength shifts the balance of power, and those who benefit from that balance will always call it dangerous.

Some characters carry rage without apology. Scáthach says what many women have felt but are rarely allowed to voice: "Men are the root of all evil… Do you ken even a single woman who has never fallen prey to the whims of a man?" Her fortress becomes a sanctuary for those who refuse to be broken, a reminder that women's safety is rarely accidental. It is fought for, built, and defended.

Destiny Doomed reclaims the space where Deirdre's voice was missing. She is not the compliant fantasy of femininity she was expected to be. She is complex, flawed, passionate, and dangerous. She is not a prophecy fulfilled, but a prophecy rewritten.

And yet, as the ending shows, killing the king is not the end of the fight. Power is never left vacant for long. Our work, like Deirdre's, has only just begun.

Anina-Marie van Wyk

Dedication

For my younger self and every young woman who’s been told her beauty is dangerous, her voice too loud, her dreams too wild.

You are not a prize to be claimed or a prophecy to be fulfilled.

You are the author of your own story.

Find your dragon. Let her breathe fire.

Notes on the Text

The legend of *Deirdre of the Sorrows* comes from the Ulster Cycle of ancient Irish mythology, a tradition kept alive for centuries through the art of oral storytelling. These tales were not first written down; they were spoken, sung, and shared by firesides, under the night sky, passed from one voice to another.

This play honours that tradition. *Destiny Doomed* was first performed outdoors, echoing the campfire gatherings where myths like this were born. Directors and producers are strongly encouraged to embrace settings that connect audiences to this legacy: open-air theatres, festival stages, or even true fireside performances, where the magic of shared breath, flickering light, and collective imagination can bring the story to life as it was always meant to be told.

Character List

Deirdre (Deer-drah) (16–25, Mezzo-soprano): Striking and spirited, balancing vulnerability with fierce resolve. Requires strong emotional and vocal range to convey both tender intimacy and powerful defiance.

Blathnaid / Scáthach (Blah-nid, Sca-tuck) (35–55, Mezzo-soprano): A dual role contrasting a warm, shrewdly maternal witch with a fierce, battle-hardened warrior. Demands strong presence, vocal power, and clear distinction between nurturing guidance and commanding strength.

Naoise (Nee-shuh) (20–30, Tenor): An earnest young warrior whose bravery is tempered by loyalty until love awakens his defiance. Requires strong chemistry with Deirdre and a convincing shift from dutiful soldier to true ally.

Conchubar (Con-cho-bar) (30+, Baritone): A blustering, entitled ruler whose charisma masks menace. Requires strong presence and comedic timing, shifting seamlessly between arrogant absurdity and oppressive intimidation.

Maigne (Mahn-yuh) (35–55, Tenor): A sly, charming manipulator who thrives on deception and self-interest. Requires charismatic presence with a menacing edge and controlled, calculating physicality.

Production Details

Destiny Doomed was developed and produced by Observatory Theatre, after *Campfire Cabaret: The Legend of Deirdre* (Etch Events).

Book, Music and Lyrics by Anina-Marie van Wyk.

Dramaturgy by Lachlan Driscoll.

Based on the legend 'Deirdre of the Sorrows', originally from The Ulster Cycle, translated by Randy Lee Eickhoff.

Season Dates: September 29 - October 8, 2022. Performed outdoors at Musgrave Park, South Brisbane.

Creative Team

Director & Musical Director: Anina-Marie van Wyk
Movement Director: Sara Jane Aistrope
Lighting & Sound Design: Lachlan Driscoll
Stage Manager: Charlotte Carter
Fight Director: Jason McKell
Vocal Coach: Georg Gleeson
Assistant Director: Zara Chandler
Dialect Coach: Trina Pickens

Cast

Deirdre: Clarise Ooi
Blathnaid/Scátach: Laura Fois
Naoise: Elliot Daniel Gough
Conchubar: Kieran J. Evans
Maigne: Jesse Blachut

Observatory Theatre

Artistic Director & Producer: Lachlan Driscoll

Destiny Doomed

1 – The Prophecy

The stage is dark. We see a sudden flash of light and we hear the thunder crash and rumble. On one side of the stage, Blathnaid emerges where she is watching events unfold through her scrying mirror/bowl. More lightning and thunder. A hooded figure emerges from the shadows. He speaks in a booming voice.

Song 1 - Destiny Doomed

CHOIR: Oooohhh (“Destiny Theme”)

CATHBAD:
The winds of destiny stirs the sails
No one who fights her prevails
All are moved by her fancy and whim
None can fight, none can win

BLATHNAID:
A long time ago, the King of Eire came
To Felimid’s house for a feast in his name
And all the King’s men revelled in his reign
And drank fancy wine by the flames
Later that night when his spirits were high
Felimid asked for a blessing for his child
From Cathbad the Druid to his pregnant wife
Who sat in a chair by the fire

CHOIR: Ooooohhh (“Destiny Theme”)

CATHBAD:
A girl will be born with eyes like magic
But she will bear a fate terribly tragic
She will bring down dreadful destruction
A wondrous, deadly disruption

ALL:
And he said,
This girl will be beautiful, her eyes like magic
But her fate will be tragic, a destiny doomed
This girl will be wonderful, but she’ll bring destruction

Eire (Eye-ruh) – Ireland

A pretty disruption, a destiny doomed

BLATHNAID: All the King's men were scared what this meant.
How could one child bring such discontent?
But Cathbad was sure that the girl would torment
And bring about the warriors' end

CHOIR: Ooooh ("Destiny Theme")

CATHBAD: Her beauty will be such never before known
All the king's men will want her for their own
She will bring discord, disputes, and discontent
This girl with a doomed destiny will be their end

ALL: This girl will be beautiful, her eyes like magic
But her fate will be tragic, a destiny doomed
This girl will be wonderful, but she'll bring destruction
A pretty disruption

Doomed to destroy all the King's men
They'll never put them back together again
When she's done with them, a pretty disruption
Doomed to destroy all the King's men
They'll never put them back together again

When she's done with them
A pretty disruption, a destiny doomed
This girl will be beautiful, her eyes like magic
But her fate will be tragic, a destiny doomed

Song Ends

The thunder rumbles. The lightning flashes. Cathbad disappears.

CONCHUBAR: Ráiméis! A little lassie can be no threat to my men's fealty. I am the most mighty ruirí alive.

MAIGNE: With all due respect, my ruirí, the druid's visions have never led you astray.

Ráiméis (Rah-mesh) - Nonsense, rubbish
Ruirí (Roo-ree) - King

CONCHUBAR: Are you suggesting that a woman will overthrow my reign of Inisfáil?

MAIGNE: Níl, of course not. But...

Song 2 - Beautiful Women

MAIGNE: Beautiful women are dangerous
Corrupting and cantankerous
She'll sink us or she'll anchor us

Beautiful women are dangerous
Tempting and traitorous
She'll be the doomsday for us

This girl will be the death of you and me
So we can't take a chance and let her be

CONCHUBAR: *[spoken]* What would you have me do then? Kill a baby?

MAIGNE: Lock her up, close her in!
Don't let her out, we lack discipline

CONCHUBAR: *[spoken]* Tá. It's only fitting such a dangerous, beautiful woman is destined to be mine.

Beautiful women are dangerous
Belligerent and barbarous
She's a blood-thirsty sorceress

Beautiful women are dangerous
Lustful and lecherous
She's a tempest, she's treacherous

BOTH: This girl will be the death of you and me
So we can't take a chance and just let her be

So lock her up, and close her in
Don't let her out, we lack discipline

Inisfáil (Inish-fail) - Romantic, poetic term for Ireland

So lock her up!

Song Ends

CONCHUBAR: But who can be entrusted to guard the lass until she comes of a marriageable age?

MAIGNE: I ken of a witch, stubborn but loyal. Deep in the woods.
She shall never be found there.

A baby's crying is heard.

2 – The Woods

Deidre appears and lowers the hood of her clock.

DEIRDRE: They say I am the true tragic heroine of Inisfáil's legend. Deirdre of the Sorrows, they call me. But they are wrong. This is my story.

BLATHNAID: So it came to be that Maigne convinced the ruirí to send the lass to me, Blathnaid. I alone was allowed to set eyes on Deirdre. Men love to play, and a game was afoot. But I was playing a game of my own. For a witch does not live by the rules of men.

Song 3 - Resident Feminist Witch

BLATHNAID: Through the trees, by the riverbend
Far away from the world of men
Deep in the dark, dark wood
My little white cottage stood

And all the women came to me
To be all that they can be
I am renowned far and wide
The whispered witch of the fireside

I'm Blathnaid, the brave
Blathnaid, the bold

Blathnaid, I’m not gonna do as I’m told

Blathnaid, the boss
Blathnaid, the bitch
Blathnaid, your resident feminist witch

I teach potions and poetry

DEIRDRE: We practised swords and archery

BOTH: Deep in the dark, dark wood
Women who always could
We learned science and politics

BLATHNAID: I do my own little magic tricks
I am renowned far and wide

BOTH: The whispered witch of the fireside

BLATHNAID: I’m Blathnaid, the brave
Blathnaid, the bold

DEIRDRE: Blathnaid, she’s not gonna do as she’s told

BOTH: Blathnaid, the boss
Blathnaid, the bitch
Blathnaid, your resident feminist witch

BLATHNAID: And so when the King sent Deirdre to me
I was determined that she should be
The master of her own fate

I’m Blathnaid, the brave
Blathnaid, the bold
Blathnaid, I’m not gonna do as I’m told

BOTH: Blathnaid, the boss
Blathnaid, the bitch
Blathnaid, your resident feminist witch

Song Ends

BLATHNAID: Take up your sword

Deirdre lifts her sword.

BLATHNAID: Mind your elbows

Deirdre corrects her stance, a sword skirmish ensues between the two.

DEIRDRE: Blathnaid taught me all that she knew.

BLATHNAID: I wanted for Deirdre to make her own path.

DEIRDRE: I learned to wield a sword.

Blathnaid grazes Deirdre's arm. They put down the swords and head over to a large brewing pot. Which Deirdre stirs, then ladles into cups as they drink.

DEIRDRE: I learned to brew healing potions.

BLATHNAID: I wanted for her to ken that her beauty did not make her wicked, that she was not blameworthy for the actions of men who could not control their thirst.

DEIRDRE: Blathnaid taught me to recite poetry and debate politics.

BLATHNAID: She had but one fatal flaw. She believed in fíorghrá... true love.

Song 4 - Obsessed

DEIRDRE: I've seen a man in my visions
Now I've got ambitions
For true love collisions

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* These fanciful dreams will be your downfall.

DEIRDRE: I've seen his eyes in my mind
He's gentle and kind
Superbly designed

Fíorghrá (Fee-or-ah) - True love

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* Oh spare me!

DEIDRE: I'm ready to
Fly the nest
And try my best to love him

I'm possessed
I'll die obsessed to love him true

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* You'd risk all our efforts for some man?

DEIRDRE: *[spoken]* He would not be just any man!

I've met a man in my dreams
Now I'm bursting at the seams
With romantic schemes

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* We have a plan, Deirdre!

DEIRDRE: Nothing can keep us apart
'Cause I know my heart
I've got love off the charts

And I'm ready to
Fly the nest
And try my best to love him

I'm possessed
I'll die obsessed to love him

BLATHNAID: True love will be nothing more than your disarming,
my darling
True love is such a bore, there's no prince charming, my darling

DEIRDRE: But I've seen his face in my visions
Now I've got ambitions
For true love collisions

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* It's not safe!

DEIRDRE: And I'm ready to

Fly the nest
And try my best to love him
I'm possessed
I'll die obsessed to love him true

Song Ends

BLATHNAID: Deirdre's fanciful dreams were the root of a most terrible enmity between us. I feared for her, I only thought to protect her. So I made a plan. We were to flee to Alba to seek sanctuary in the Fortress of Shadows; home of the most fearsome warrior woman and my dearest friend, Scáthach.

DEIRDRE: At every moment, Blathnaid declared we would take our leave. But the days turned to night and the seasons changed, year after year, and we remained in Inisfáil. I grew agitated, impatient. I feared I would become just an old spinster forever bound to that place.

BLATHNAID: The girl was not ready for the journey but she protested. Despite it all, it was not in my power to fight destiny.

DEIRDRE: Oh, what a clever ruse! It's the gold the ruirí pays you in secret that keeps you here and not my lack of preparedness.

BLATHNAID: I ken not what you speak of.

DEIRDRE: Where do you go when the moon is full?

BLATHNAID: Draíocht, Deirdre. I am a witch. I have rituals.

DEIRDRE: You are a fraud!

BLATHNAID: Deirdre...

DEIRDRE: The ruirí pays you. I am not your charge, I am your captive.

Draíocht (Dree-ucht) - Magic, enchantment

BLATHNAID: The ruirí does pay me. We need the gold to live. I only want to keep you safe.

DEIRDRE: Then let us go now to Scáthach's!

BLATHNAID: You are not ready!

DEIRDRE: You are a trickster! It's only a matter of time until you will gift me to the ruirí.

BLATHNAID: I would never.

DEIRDRE: Well, I don't need you. I will make the journey alone.

Deirdre turns on her heels and storms away from Blathnaid and offstage.

3 – The Hunt

Maigne and Naoise enter. Bows strapped across their backs.

MAIGNE: The boys are calling on the tavern tonight. You should join us for a drink.

NAOISE: I thought the purpose of joining the ruirí's men was to fight, not mindless hedonism, seeking pleasure in drink and brothels.

MAIGNE: You're still young, mo mhac. Time is your friend, Naoise.

NAOISE: Time waits for no man. At my age, my father was ruirí's curadh. Brion the Brave!

MAIGNE: Tá, Brion was an exceptional warrior. But foolhardy. That's how he met his end. I was there, you ken. Such potential wasted so young. Níl, have patience, your time will come. And yet, perhaps there is something you can do to prove your worth to the ruirí. But níl, perhaps not. I fear it's far too perilous for one so young.

Mo mhac (Mo-mack) - My son
Curadh (Cah-roo) - Warrior, hero

NAOISE: I am not fearful, Maigne. What is this quest?

MAIGNE: I suppose you're a strong lad. There are witches in these parts; powerful, terrifying creatures torturing villagers. If you were to bring a witch's head to the ruirí, that would surely gain his favour.

NAOISE: Where can I find such a witch then?

MAIGNE: The woods

NAOISE: But it is forbidden by the ruirí's decree.

MAIGNE: Tá, it is forbidden but why? Only one who is pure of croí can enter the witches realm. It's only forbidden to protect those not strong enough to face a witch. But you...never have I witnessed such loyalty and courage. Tá, you are destined for this.

NAOISE: Show me.

Maigne leads Naoise on, points him down the path into the woods.

Song 5 - Chasing The Sun In His Shadow

NAOISE: There was a man who came before me
A warrior brave and true
He was my dad, he'd do anything for me
A hero to aspire to

And now I walk in the shadow of his legacy
Just trying so hard to be the man he would want me to be
Chasing the sun in his shadow

I'm still trying to find my way
To show that I'm brave and true
To be like my dad, to save the day
A hero to admire too

Croí (Kree) - Heart

So I walk in the shadow of his legacy
Just trying so hard to be the man he would want me to be
Chasing the sun in his shadow

But sometimes I wonder
What does it all mean?
Will I go under? Will I lose myself in his legacy?
Am I only here just to follow his tracks down the trail?
Is my life to be just a memory of a man who served a king
until he died and left his son behind?

But still I walk in the shadow of his legacy
Just trying so hard to be the man he would want me to be
Chasing the sun in his shadow

How can I be who he wants me to be
Chasing the sun in his shadow
Chasing the sun in his shadow
Chasing the sun in his shadow

Song Ends

4 - Kismet

Naoise is making his way through dense woods, slicing through bushes with his sword.

Deirdre emerges from the woods, she follows Naoise and eventually he becomes aware of her presence.

NAOISE: Who goes there?

DEIRDRE: I recognised him as my fíorghrá by his voice alone. Before I even understood what it meant. My croí was beating fiercely fast as I followed his trail through the woods.

NAOISE: Why are you following me?

DEIRDRE: I am not following you! It’s by chance, we travel the same path.

NAOISE: You are her!

DEIRDRE: Who?

NAOISE: The witch!

DEIRDRE: I am not a witch!

NAOISE: Tá. You certainly don’t look like one.

DEIRDRE: Oh really? And what does a witch look like then?

NAOISE: Ancient and wizened, with the power of flight by way of a broomstick.

DEIRDRE: That’s absurd. You clearly ken naught about witches.

NAOISE: And you are an expert?

DEIRDRE: Perhaps. You ken naught about me.

DEIRDRE: Blathnaid would have condemned me for speaking to this stranger.

NAOISE: I ken I ought to look away but I cannot bring myself to do so.

DEIRDRE: Then do not.

She leans in and kisses him. He kisses her back.

DEIRDRE: And you are?

NAOISE: I am Naoise, warrior, ruirí’s man.

DEIRDRE: My croí stopped! A ruirí’s man! It did not take him long to piece it together. I was a girl cursed by fate after all. And all in the ruirí’s service kenned it.

NAOISE: Wait, wait for heaven's sake! Why are you running? I am a man of good croí!

DEIRDRE: Have you ever considered that men who keep women captive for the sole purpose of a forced marriage cannot have the privilege of calling themselves honourable?

NAOISE: I just obey orders. We are taught never to question.

DEIRDRE: Perhaps you should. Question.

NAOISE: My father was a warrior. A curadh. He lost his life in service of the last ruirí. I owe my allegiance to his legacy.

DEIRDRE: So his reign goes unchecked and his policies unchallenged for generations of men who operate under some misguided sense of brotherhood?

Beat.

My observation clearly struck a nerve.

NAOISE: You speak true. I ought to have questioned his policies, his ideas. I've been a fool so blinded by my own quest to prove myself worthy of Brion's legacy. I want to help you.

DEIRDRE: Níl, you can't.

NAOISE: Tá, I can. An entire lifetime I have dedicated to my father's legacy. Yet Brion was an honourable man. He never would have forced captive women into loveless marriages. Perhaps if... if I can help you then maybe someday you could look at me and see a man worthy of your grá. Please, let me keep you safe.

DEIRDRE: I do not need you.

NAOISE: Tá, so I can see. I’m the one who needs you.

He leans in and kisses her. She kisses back.

Song 6 - Until The Stars Don’t Shine

NAOISE: We can run away, take my hand we’ll leave today
We’ll set off at dawn, before they know
We’ll find a place where they won’t go

BOTH: I will be yours ‘til the end of the earth
You will be mine ‘till the end of time
No one can tell me that this love is a crime
We will be us ‘til the stars don’t shine

DEIRDRE: How lovely the moon in your eyes
Reflecting the hope in the skies
A promise of light in the darkness
A dream that comes true regardless

BOTH: I will be yours ‘til the end of the earth
You will be mine ‘till the end of time
No one can tell me that this love is a crime
We will be us ‘til the stars don’t shine

And if they should try to break us
We’ll never let them take us alive
We’ll battle the storms together
And never let them sever us apart

I will be yours ‘til the end of the earth
You will be mine ‘till the end of time
No one can tell me that this love is a crime
We will be us ‘til the stars don’t shine

Song Ends

5 – Old Friends

Maigne's house.

MAIGNE: Fáilte, Naoise! What a lovely surprise. I would have thought you'd be at the palace by now, laying the witch's head at the feet of the ruirí.

NAOISE: I never found the witch. But I need your help.

MAIGNE: And who might this enchanting young lass be?

Maigne reaches out for Deirdre's hand.

NAOISE: Maigne, may I introduce...my wife.

DEIRDRE: [*whispered]* Your wife?

NAOISE: Shhh.

Deirdre seems pleased with the notion of being Naoise's wife.

MAIGNE: Tá, lad, you waste no time. A pleasure to make your acquaintance miss...

DEIRDRE: Deirdre.

MAIGNE: Deirdre.

Maigne leans down to kiss Deirdre's hand. A long lingering kiss.

NAOISE: I did not ken where else to go.

MAIGNE: The ruirí is searching for her?

NAOISE: Can you shelter us?

MAIGNE: For you, mo mhac? But of course.

Song 7 – Spectacle

MAIGNE: Come on in and sit by the fire, my friend

I can see that you must be tired, my friend
Have a drink with me and put your feet up

Maigne pulls out a leafy drug which he places into a pipe and hands it to Naoise.

Naaise consumes trustingly.

MAIGNE: You don't have to be on your guard around here
Bring some bread and cheese, how about another beer?
Have a drink with me and put your feet up

CHOIR: Ooooohhh ("Destiny Theme")

We watch as Naoise slowly becomes intoxicated and eventually passes out. Deirdre is left alone with Maigne.

MAIGNE: Come sit here by me, lass. It's not every day I have such a beautiful guest in my house.

Deirdre walks to sit closer by Maigne.

MAIGNE: You sparkle like the stars
You dazzle me like art
You radiate with light
You illuminate the night
And everywhere you are
You'll always have my heart

DEIRDRE: *[spoken]* You flatter me, ceannasaí.

MAIGNE: *[spoken]* You don't give yourself enough credit. Naoise is a lucky man, indeed.

Blathnaid emerges where she is watching events unfold through her scrying mirror/bowl.

BLATHNAID: The man wants the girl from the woods by the river
Her body like sin and her eyes make him shiver

Ceannasaí (Canna-sigh) - Leader, chief

And everything in him is filled with a quivering thirst
And he says

MAIGNE: The girl from the woods is here in my palace
Where I can give her a taste of my ... status
And she will be mine to subdue with my gallant flirts

BLATHNAID: He thinks she's his property for his debauchery
Just because her body turns him on

MAIGNE: She's my spectacle, my collectible
Trust me, I am never wrong

BLATHNAID: But the girl from the woods isn't made for his pleasure
Her body's a sacred sanctified treasure
And she will not be a tool for his measuring stick

He doesn't own her just since he has power
She's not a snack for him to devour
And he doesn't win just because he's a towering dick

She is not his property for his debauchery
Just because her body turns him on

MAIGNE: She's my spectacle, my collectible
Trust me, I am never wrong

BLATHNAID: So to all of the girls who feel shame in their skins
Remember that you're not to blame for his sins
And never give in, your story begins now

You are not his property, for his debauchery
Just because your body turns him on

You are not his spectacle or his collectible
Just because he thinks he's never wrong
Doesn't make him right

Maigne has slowly moved closer to Deirdre throughout the song. It's clear that she is flattered by his attention but uncomfortable about how to react.

MAIGNE: You sparkle like the stars
You dazzle me like art
You radiate with light
You illuminate the night
And everywhere you are
You'll always have my heart

Maigne leans across and kisses Deirdre. She jumps back. There is a shocked pause. Maigne takes another step closer. Suddenly, we hear the roar of a dragon in the distance. Deirdre picks up Naoise's tankard and smacks Maigne across the head, knocking him out cold.

Song Ends

DEIRDRE: I was shocked at my own power. I never knew I had the heart to strike a man thus.

She wakes Naoise who slowly takes in the scene.

DEIRDRE: Naoise was not happy. Maigne was a lifelong friend. And there I stood having exacted a most terrible violence.

NAOISE: This draíocht you possess, it has a way of turning men's hearts.

DEIRDRE: I was terrified. I didn't ken my own power. In that moment I only wanted to release Naoise from it. The prophecy, this draíocht. I had not the croí to bend him with it.

Deirdre picks up her bag and makes to leave. Naoise chases after her.

MAIGNE: *[as they leave]* Go hifreann leat, Naoise!

BLATHNAID: The ruirí issued a formal decree. Naoise, a wanted man, dead or alive and a hefty sum promised for Deirdre's safe return to the palace.

Go hifreann leat (Guh-hiff-rin-latt) - To hell with you

DEIRDRE: We were no longer safe anywhere in Inisfáil.

Song 8 – Deidre Dragonheart

CHOIR: Deirdre Dragonheart, fled from Maigne, leannán by her side
O'er the mountains, down the track, on a pirate ship to hide

Raise the anchor, hoist the sails, cross the dark blue deep
Captain's orders, hide the boarders, ocean secrets keep

Deirdre Dragonheart, deadly damsel
Doomed to destroy them all
Naoise's beloved and Maigne's coveted
Conchubar's conquest call

Raise the anchor, hoist the sails, cross the dark blue deep
Captain's orders, hide the boarders, ocean secrets keep

Song Ends

6 – The Fortress of Shadows

Scátach's Fortress of Shadows. Deirdre and Naoise approach cautiously.

SCÁTHACH: Who dares cross my borders with a man in tow?

DEIRDRE: I am Deirdre. This is... my husband, Naoise. We seek shelter.

SCÁTHACH: Oh milseán, I can be of some service to you. But I cannot allow your man to stay.

NAOISE: I am not leaving her.
SCÁTHACH: Oh how gallant, tá tú an-chróga. Níl, milseán, I

Milseán (Mill-shawn) – Sweet
Tá tú an-chróga (Ta-too-an-chro-gah) - You are very brave

am sorry but no men allowed.

NAOISE: What did I ever do to you?

SCÁTHACH: Not you, but your kind. Men are the root of all evil.

Song 9 - Fortress of Shadows

SCÁTHACH: A long time ago, big men who were strong came in ships to plunder and pillage
My parents didn't know how to fight, they were fools and these slavers took me from my village

I was scared, I was weak, but I was never naïve
I knew what this life would be for a pretty girl like me
So I bided my time and I learned to wield a knife
I would never let them take me without a proper fight

One night, when the camp was quiet
One stupid man thought that he would try it
That night, he climbed into my tent
He slid his sly fingers right over my breast
And under my dress
I drew my breathe, I was ready for this
I would not acquiesce

I count
One, I reached under my mattress
Two, I feel for my dagger
Three, I brace for the impact and
Stab, my hand is bloody red
Stab, my dress is bloody wet
Stab, the man is bloody dead

So I stripped him of his armor
I slipped out of my dress
I donned his heavy chainmail
Slid his bow across my chest
Then I fled into the night a little girl all on my own

And I traveled far away until I found myself a home

This is the fortress of shadows
Where everyone knows, what Scáthach says goes
And nobody dares to defy me

I rule the fortress of shadows
Where maidens aim arrows at the hearts of their foes
And nobody dares to deny me

So now you see why I can't simply let a man into my house
There are women here who need to be protected from your spouse
He might seem to be a quiet, sweet sort of a kind
But he's just like all the other men these women left behind

This is the fortress of shadows
Where everyone knows, what Scáthach says goes
And nobody dares to defy me
So don't you try me

Song Ends

NAOISE: So you would condemn us all for the sins of a few?

SCÁTHACH: More than just a few. Do you ken even a single woman who has never fallen prey to the whims of a man?

What about you, milseán? Come closer, bring your face into the light so I can see you. Who are you?

DEIRDRE: I already gave my name.

SCÁTHACH: Tá, Deirdre. But a name is of little consequence and has nothing at all to do with your person.

DEIRDRE: I trained with Blathnaid.

SCÁTHACH: She sent you to me?

DEIRDRE: Tá, she sent the both of us.

SCÁTHACH: Ach, trust that foolhardy witch to send me a lass with a man in tow. *[claps hands]* Take them to the east wing!

7 – Eyes Everywhere

The King's castle. The king is seated on his throne. Maigne enters.

MAIGNE: My ruirí, there's something you ought to ken. I come bearing news of Naoise and a lovely young lass. The most beautiful creature I've ever seen. I kenned at once who she must be. So of course, I will do all in my power to return her to you.

CONCHUBAR: And? Where is she?

MAIGNE: She has become very powerful. A cunning little witch. She used her draíocht to trick me and escaped. But fear not, my men have been searching. We tracked her to a ship; she crossed the border.

CONCHUBAR: Where is she?!

MAIGNE: The fortress of shadows, my ruirí.

CONCHUBAR: Scáthach, that conniving bitch.

MAIGNE: Tá, but do not be distressed, my ruirí. I have a man...a woman... on the inside who assures me that young Naoise is terribly homesick.

CONCHUBAR: What do you propose?

MAIGNE: Send a letter, my ruirí. An olive branch, if you will. He will return to Inisfáil and she will surely follow.

8 – The Olive Branch

Conchubar sits down to write the letter.

CONCHUBAR: Dear Naoise. It took a great amount of persuasion from your fellow warriors, but I send this letter in the hopes of cordially inviting your return to Inisfáil.

Despite your foolish deed, I have taken it upon myself to forgive you as a just ruirí would. To demonstrate my sincerity, a great feast shall be held in your honour upon your return. You and your lovely wife shall be welcomed back into my service with open arms.

Back to the Fortress of Shadows. Deirdre emerges with Naoise following her and reading the letter to her.

NAOISE: I promise you and Deirdre nothing but safety for as long as you reside in Inisfáil. Awaiting your return in anticipation,your ruirí Conchubar. We can return home.

DEIRDRE: Do you truly think the ruirí so forgiving? What of the decree? The price on your head?

NAOISE: It's all forgiven. It says so right here in this letter in the ruirí's own hand.

DEIRDRE: Mo chroidhe, what if this is some deception? I ken Scáthach and the maidens are harsh and unbending. I ken we've no privacy inside these walls. But they have kept us safe thus far.

NAOISE: They despise me, Deirdre. I long for Inisfáil, mo chroidhe. To see my friends, my home.

Mo chroidhe (Mo-cree) - My heart, my love

DEIRDRE: Tá I ken it, leannán. I ken. And yet I fear for your safety and my own.

Song 10 - I'm Going Home

NAOISE: I long for home, across the sea
I long for home where my friends wait for me

DEIRDRE: I know you want to go back home but we should take it slow
How do we really know that he's ready to let it all go?

NAOISE: Even after all these years I've still been yearning
For my returning, my heart is burning

I miss my home, across the sea
I miss my home my home, my friends wait for me

DEIRDRE: I'm happy here in this place
If we go, we don't know what awaits
I don't want to play games with our fates

He's never been the one to let bygones be by
Forgive and forget
I don't want us to regret, losing sight and rushing into it

NAOISE: But I long for home where all the grass is green
And my old friends are gathering, I miss my old familiar routine

I miss my home, across the sea
I miss my home my home, my friends wait for me

DEIRDRE: I'm happy here in this place
If we go, we don't know what awaits
I don't want to play games with our fates

NAOISE: How lovely the moon in your eyes

BOTH: Reflecting the hope in the skies

Leannán (Lyan-awn) – Lover

I will be yours ‘til the end of the earth
You will be mine ‘til the stars don’t shine

NAOISE: *[spoken]* Come home with me, Deirdre.

DEIRDRE: *[spoken]* I do miss the woods. And your smile. And privacy.

Oh to have but a moment truly alone with you!

Naoise smiles. He scoops her up in his arms, twirls around with her and kisses her passionately. He puts her down and slips his hand into hers.

BOTH: We’re going home, across the sea
We’re going home, my friends wait for me
We’re going home, across the sea
We’re going home, my friends wait for me

Song Ends

9 – Shut Up

The King’s castle. Blathnaid enters the King’s chambers.

Song 11 - She Will Bow To Me

BLATHNAID: A long time ago, I danced in the rain
Alone in the woods when a messenger came
Said the king wanted me, to pick my brain
About a girl with a sorrowful name

[spoken] You summoned me.

CONCHUBAR: *[spoken]* Tá, Blathnaid.

I want to know if Deirdre’s still beautiful
I need to know if she will be dutiful
She will be mine, that’s indisputable
Naoise will die, he is delusional

BLATHNAID: Deirdre is not who she used to be
Her beauty’s dried up like an autumn tree

She is not worth your energy
Please just let her be a memory

CONCHUBAR: You will bow to me
You will bow to me

He forces Blathnaid to kneel before him, pushing her down with his cane/staff.

BLATHNAID: She will not bow to you

CONCHUBAR: You're lying to me, I know she's beautiful
Her eyes like magic

BLATHNAID: You selfish swine

CONCHUBAR: There's no need to panic, she will be mine

BLATHNAID: She will not bow to you

CONCHUBAR: I get what I want and I want her wonderful
Her body fantastic

BLATHNAID: You selfish swine

CONCHUBAR: She'll bend like elastic, she will be mine

Blathnaid becomes rigid, eyes turn white, and we know she's trying to communicate telepathically with Deirdre.

BLATHNAID: Run, Deirdre, run, don't ever come home

CONCHUBAR: She will bow to me, I am the king
You'll never win, be the same
You'll be somebody new

CONCHUBAR: He will die tonight, she will be mine
You'll never win, be the same
You'll be somebody new

I've seen a girl in the woods by the river
Her body like sin and her eyes make me shiver

And everything in me is filled with a quivering thirst

The girl from the woods must be brought to my palace
Where I can give her a taste of my status
And she will be mine to subdue with my gallant flirts

BLATHNAID: She is not your property, for your debauchery
Just because her body turns you on

CONCHUBAR: She's my spectacle, my collectible
Trust me, Blathnaid, I am never wrong
She belongs to me

Song Ends

CONCHUBAR: Soon little Deirdre will cross the border and that insidious traitor, Naoise, will be dead.

BLATHNAID: You are a monster!

CONCHUBAR: *[slapping Blathnaid]* Shut up, bitch!
Women never did ken when to stop talking.

He claps his hands. A man emerges.

Take her to the dungeons.

She is chained and led to the dungeons.

10 – A Nightmare

Naoise and Deirdre spend many nights travelling home.

The "Destiny Theme" is intermingled with thunderous lightning cracks as the mood slowly grows more ominous - Naoise and Deirdre are walking into a trap.

On the last night of their travels, Deirdre is asleep when suddenly there is a loud dragon roar. She wakes in fright and screams.

11 – Culmination

The King's Castle. Thunderclaps. Lightning flashes across the sky.

Song 12 - Kaboom

NAOISE: There's a feeling you get
When you're marching the road to your death
It's like you're balancing there
On the edge and just holding your breath

And you know that you can't fight your fate and
You can't dodge your doom
It's like you're on a collision course
Bracing yourself for kaboom
Just waiting to fall

DEIRDRE: I will not let them take you from me
They'll have to fight just to break through me

I will not yield and I'll never give in
I'm not a prize for an egotistic king

BLATHNAID: Deirdre, my love, why did you come?
You won't with the battle this time
But I know that you'll try

Deirdre, my love, I know you're strong
But the king has an army
And the one you love will die

CONCHUBAR: You're a traitorous fool and
You're marching the road to your death
You're not balancing
You're just a coward who's holding his breath

MAIGNE: And you know that you can't fight your fate and
You can't dodge your doom
Because you're on a collision course so
Brace yourself for kaboom

CONCHUBAR: I will not let you take her from me

MAIGNE: The crown is mine, I will make it be

CONCHUBAR & MAIGNE: I will not yield and I'll never give in

CONCHUBAR: She is mine, because I am the king

BLATHNAID: Deirdre, my love, why did you come?
You won't with the battle this time
But I know that you'll try

Deirdre, my love, I know you're strong
But the king has an army
And the one you love will die

NAOISE: There's a feeling you get
When you're marching the road to your death
It's like you're balancing there
On the edge and just holding your breath
Just waiting to fall

Song Ends

CONCHUBAR: You are a fool, Naoise.

NAOISE: Maigne! Please, help me!

CONCHUBAR: Who is brave enough to step forward and take this coward's head?

BLATHNAID: You're the coward!

CONCHUBAR: Shut up, bitch! Where are my men?

Silence.

MAIGNE: My ruirí, there has been a revolt.

CONCHUBAR: A what?

MAIGNE: Some of the men have deserted your service, denying you as their ruirí. Brion the Brave was a

hero, respected by many, they will not support the slaughter... the execution of his son.

Thunder.

CONCHUBAR: This is preposterous. I am the ruirí and she will be mine. Kill him!

MAIGNE: I shall do it, my ruirí.

Maigne takes out his sword. He suddenly becomes every bit the evil villain.

MAIGNE: Like father like son. You did not really think us friends did you, mo mhac?

Maigne swings his sword and Naoise is dead.

12 – Damned Damsel

BLATHNAID: Naoise's death left Deirdre utterly heartbroken. She was at the mercy of the ruirí. I had failed her. In the end I could do nothing to save her from fate.

Song 13 - Sugar

CONCHUBAR: You'd be lost without me
Everyone sings about me
I'm the king but you doubt me
Honey, don't you dare discount me

I can give you everything
A massive diamond wedding ring
A polished marble kitchen sink
Honey, you won't need anything but me

You drive me mad, honey don't be sad, sugar
You've been very bad
I'll be the best you've ever had, sugar
I'm a gentle guy, honey don't be shy, sugar
I'm not gonna bite, I'll give you everything tonight

You belong to me

You can take your chances, with peasantry romances
You can chase Atlantis
But honey you won't find the answers
I can get you in the mood, I will treat you pretty good
I look stunning when I'm nude
Honey don't be such a prude with me

You drive me mad, honey don't be sad, sugar
You've been very bad
I'll be the best you've ever had, sugar
I'm a gentle guy, honey don't be shy, sugar
I'm not gonna bite, I'll give you everything tonight

Sugar plum, don't look so glum
I'm gonna eat you up and make you come... undone
Sweet sugar plum
I'm gonna make you dance to the beat of my drum

You drive me mad, honey don't be sad, sugar
You've been very bad
I'll be the best you've ever had, sugar
I'm a gentle guy, honey don't be shy, sugar
I'm not gonna bite, I'll give you everything tonight
You belong to me

Song Ends

Suddenly, there is a dragon roar in the distance. Conchubar startles.

Song 14 - Dragon

DEIRDRE: If you think I'm weak then you're sorely mistaken
I'm gonna wreak havoc, speak magic, breaking
Your heart like it's fine china, like it's a crime kinda
Biding my time 'til I strike
I will bite you

Embrace the calm before you drink your drip
Cause I'm the storm that's gonna sink your ship
Sing a psalm before you blink and slip
Cause I'm the storm that's gonna sink your ship

If you think you'll win then you don't know my talents
I'm gonna bring scorcher grim torture dragons
Will fly like it's hell today, like it's a spell to slay
Biding my time 'til I strike
I will bite you

Embrace the calm before you drink your drip
Cause I'm the storm that's gonna sink your ship
Sing a psalm before you blink and slip
Cause I'm the storm that's gonna sink your ship

BLATHNAID: *[chanting]* Tine, aer, uisce, ithir
Tine, aer, uisce, ithir

With the words, Deirdre's chains are released. She begins to advance on the ruirí.

DEIRDRE: I'm a dragon in pretty skin, you're gonna pay for your sin
I'm a woman on a quest
I'm gonna rip your heart from your chest
I'm gonna eat you alive

Deirdre picks up Conchubar's dagger from the table where he left it and stabs it right into his heart. Blood spurts onto her dress.

He falls right where he's standing. Deirdre rises from the blood, wielding the dagger.

13 – Finale

Song 15 - Warrior Heroine

DEIRDRE: A long time ago, they told my story
A tragedy of destiny
I'm not cursed, my fate's reversed

And their callous words can never hurt me

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* Rumours did spread apace. Women from across Eire whispered of the legendary warrior girl who had felled a king.

DEIRDRE: They thought that I would be quiet, compliant
A fantasy of femininity
I'm not a dream, I swim upstream
I'm a gasoline, fire-breathing queen

[spoken] Women came from far and wide to train with me.

It's true, I'm a dragon in pretty skin and I win
It's my debut as your warrior heroine

Ghost Naoise emerges.

NAOISE: You're my moonbeam, my sweetest dream
My evergreen, my dragon queen
This is your song, you can't go wrong
You're so much stronger than you ever thought you were

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* Deirdre Dragonheart, they called her.

NAOISE: My dragon queen, you reign supreme
I'll bend the knee, to you my evergreen

Ghost Conchubar rises.

CONCHUBAR: I'm just an effigy, a take on masculinity
I'm unexplored and incomplete
There's probably much more to me

You'll never know what's hiding beneath my skin
It's just a show and I'm only here to play the king
I'm a cliché

BLATHNAID: A long time ago, they told women's stories
Like tragedies of destiny
We're not cursed, our fate's reversed

And their callous words can never hurt us

They thought that we would be quiet, compliant
Fantasies of femininity
We're not a dream, we swim upstream
We're gasoline, fire-breathing queens

ALL: It's true, she's a dragon in pretty skin and she wins
It's her debut as your warrior heroine

BLATHNAID: *[spoken]* But life has a habit of repeating the same cycle

DEIRDRE: *[spoken]* One less monster did not mean that all the monsters were gone.

Maigne appears.

MAIGNE: It's finally my time
I've played to win and now I'm gonna shine
It's finally my time
To be the king that I was born to be

The crown is finally mine
Everything worked out by my design
The crown is finally mine
With all its power adorned to me

Now there's no rules
When you're the ruler of the kingdom
And all these fools
Will bow to me

I'm finally the king
I feel like I could laugh and dance and sing
'Cause I'm finally the king
And you'll all submit to me

He places the crown firmly on his head. He smiles.

Song Ends

BLATHNAID: Our work had only just begun.

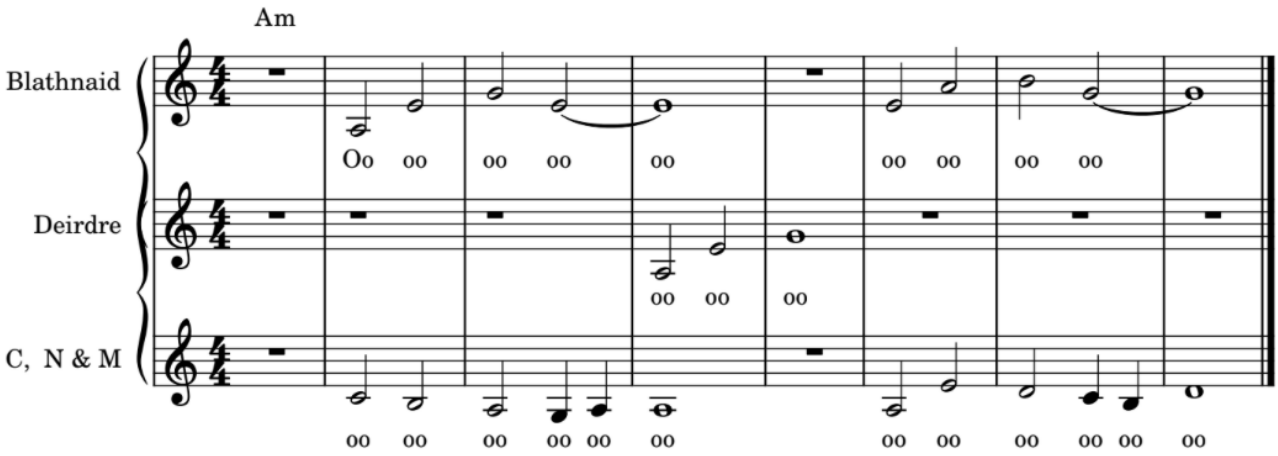
DEIRDRE: So we trained.

The End

Destiny Theme

DESTINY DOOMED: A NEW MUSICAL

Anina-Marie Van Wyk



Inquiries regarding the full score can be addressed to the author, Anina-Marie van Wyk, by email: anina.evans@gmail.com

About The Author

Anina-Marie van Wyk is an Australian-based writer, composer, and theatre-maker whose work blends folk-pop melodies with feminist storytelling. Born in South Africa and migrating to Australia at twelve years of age, she draws on her experiences of identity, belonging, and finding her voice between cultures.

She is the editor-in-chief of Bravo Brisbane and Bravo Gold Coast, arts and culture platforms showcasing local creatives and performance. A graduate of QUT's Bachelor of Fine Arts (Drama, 2014) and UQ's Master of Events Management (2016), she has written, composed, and directed original works at Anywhere Festival, including *Mettle, Moxie & Melody* (2019) and *Campfire Cabaret: The Legend of Deirdre* (2021). *Destiny Doomed* grew out of *Campfire Cabaret*, reimagining the Irish legend of Deirdre of the Sorrows as a story of resistance and self-determination.

Her creative mission is to tell stories that are lyrical, unapologetic, and unafraid to confront uncomfortable truths. Celebrating resilience and the courage to speak where silence was once expected.

About Observatory Theatre

Since we started in 2021, Observatory Theatre has been all about creating space for emerging Queensland artists to thrive. We champion new work and bring together emerging and established theatre-makers to collaborate, learn, and grow. More than just putting on shows, we're about building a community where creativity and bold storytelling take centre stage.

Our programming is driven by a desire for daring, inventive, and imaginative theatre that investigates our complicated modern world. We embrace bold ideas that challenge and inspire, ensuring that we resonate with contemporary audiences in fresh and meaningful ways.

Over the past five years, we've tackled big themes: climate change in "The Turquoise Elephant" (2023), ancient folklore through a feminist lens in "Destiny Doomed" (2022), and AI-driven robotic futures in "Control" (2022).

We're locked in to boost opportunities for artists, strengthen career pathways, and support the creation of new Australian work. Our flagship initiative is the Telescope New Writing Program, which provides essential opportunities for emerging playwrights to bring their big, bold, and burning ideas to life on stage. We encourage imagination and experimentation, supporting playwrights through dedicated support, workshopping and development, all the way to production.

Find out more: www.observatorytheatre.com

This girl will be beautiful. Her eyes like magic. But her fate will be tragic...

A destined girl is born and the King wants her to himself, locked away, controlled, his rightful claim. But the prophecy comes with a price - the child will bring great suffering - and rebellion soon ignites. Destiny? Fate? She's not going down without a fight.

Based on Irish mythology's tragic legend of 'Deirdre of the Sorrows', *Destiny Doomed* was developed and produced by Observatory Theatre, performed outdoors at Musgrave Park, South Brisbane in 2022, with book, music and lyrics by Anina-Marie van Wyk.

"A bold reimagining of the Irish folk story. *Destiny Doomed* speaks to the nature of storytelling, where a story so old, so seemingly of its time, can be recontextualised and told to a modern audience in a fresh yet familiar way."

'Theatre Haus'

"Deirdre of the Sorrows - a story of beauty, lust, and death dating back to ancient Ireland - has inspired much retelling. Brisbane based Anina-Marie van Wyk has brought this ancient tale to new audiences, with a contemporary twist. The myth is reinterpreted as a musical, featuring female empowerment and agency."

'Nothing Ever Happens in Brisbane'

"[...] van Wyk's beautiful folk pop score is wonderfully written, with memorable motifs throughout that draws the audience in as the show progresses. The book, also written by van Wyk, highlights the horrors of misogyny, the patriarchy and encouraging the audience to challenge and fight destiny. *Destiny Doomed* touches on poignant points and shows that, whilst we have modernised, misogyny is still extremely prevalent in today's society."

'Bravo Brisbane'

OBSERVATORY